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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: KMDR KPAO OIIP OPRC PGOV PREL PK

SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: JANUARY 15, 2010

Summary: Coverage of a drone strike that killed several militants in South Waziristan dominated front pages this morning. Several newspapers reported rumors that Chief of Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) Hakimullah Mehsud may be among those killed in the attack, simultaneously carrying the TTP's statement that Mehsud is "alive, safe and traveling." Prime Minister Gilani's address to the National Assembly was also featured in today's headlines. The Prime Minister condemned new U.S. screening measures as "humiliating and against [Pakistan's] self respect," and stated that the U.S. cannot win in Afghanistan without Pakistan's support. Dailies also highlighted the Prime Minister's call for the U.S. to end drone strikes and increase trade opportunities for Pakistan. Media also reported opposition leader, Chaudhry Nisar Ali's statement that "no official delegation from Pakistan should visit the U.S. unless screening goes." U.S. Special Envoy Holbrooke's Pakistan visit continued to garner media coverage for the second consecutive day. His trip to Swat valley and meeting with Pakistan Army Chief General Kayani were highlighted in nearly all major dailies, and his praise

for the people of Swat and the Pakistan Army received extensive coverage. "Dawn" reported that, "according to a senior Finance Ministry official," delays in Kerry-Lugar disbursements are caused by "lack of coordination between U.S. administration officials." Newspapers also reported Defense Minister Mukhtar's statement that American forces used several bases in Pakistan for overt and covert operations inside Afghanistan, but that the U.S. has now vacated all airbases including Shamsi Airbase in Balochistan. Senator Carl Levin's comments that Pakistani leaders privately back drone strikes while publicly denouncing them continued to receive coverage. Urdu daily, "Express," carried the U.S. Embassy's clarification that the "U.S. is not pressuring Pakistan to abandon the Iran gas pipeline project." The day's editorials echoed several themes raised in Prime Minister Gilani's address to the National Assembly: respect for Pakistan ("Nisar's Passion, Gilani's Pragmatism, Nation's Disappointment" in "The News"); U.S. assistance and Pakistani sovereignty ("Friends, Masters, and Bullies" in "The Daily Times"); and Pakistan's role in the U.S. strategy for Afghanistan ("The 'Do More' Mantra" in "The Business Recorder"). Continuing the condemnation of U.S. screening measures, Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" published a paranoid description of the security procedures in an editorial entitled "U.S. Leader Richard Holbrooke's Lie." End Summary.

TOP STORIES

News Story: Hakimullah Safe, Say Taliban: U.S. Drone Targets TTP Chief - "Dawn" (01/15)

"A U.S. drone attacked a militants' hideout near the Afghan border

in South Waziristan on Thursday, killing 12 people and wounding eight others. The pre-dawn attack in Shaktoi area triggered rumors that Hakimullah Mehsud, the chief of the banned Tahrik-i-Taliban Pakistan, had been killed. But TTP spokesman Azam Tariq dismissed the reports as 'baseless.'... Anwer Iqbal adds from Washington: Official U.S. sources refused to confirm or deny reports that Hakimullah had been killed in the attack. "We don't know," said an official when asked about the reports. AFP adds: Visiting U.S. envoy for Pakistan and Afghanistan Richard Holbrooke told reporters that he could not comment on reports of Hakimullah's death."

News Story: PM Links U.S. Afghan Success To Pak Support; Gilani To Take Up U.S. Screening Of Pakistani Nationals At Diplomatic Level - "The News" (01/15)

"Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani has made it clear to the United States that Islamabad is no mood to accept screening of its citizens at American airports. 'The matter will be taken up at the diplomatic level to seek reversal of this decision, as we will not compromise on the country's self-respect, dignity, integrity and sovereignty,' he declared in the National Assembly while responding to the points raised by the opposition leader Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan.... The Prime Minister said the United States cannot win the war in Afghanistan without Pakistan's cooperation and it is well aware of this fact."

News Story: No Official Delegation Should Visit U.S. Until New Screening Laws Withdrawn - "Daily Times" (01/15)

"No official delegation from Pakistan should visit the U.S. until the Obama administration withdraws Pakistan's name from a list of 14 countries, whose citizens are subjected to full-body searches at U.S. airports, Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan, leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly, said on Thursday."

News Story: Holbrooke Happy With Successes In Swat - "The News" (01/15)

"The United States Special Envoy to Pakistan and Afghanistan, Richard Holbrooke, on Thursday visited Swat and expressed satisfaction over the achievements made by the Pakistan Army in the operation Rah-e-Raast in the Malakand Division. Talking to local Nazims and a delegation of hotels association, he said his government would not leave Pakistan alone at this critical juncture and would help in the reconstruction of the area and rehabilitation of the victims of militancy. The U.S. envoy said the U.S. government had provided \$175 million for rehabilitation and reconstruction of the damaged infrastructure, especially the schools and roads."

News Story: U.S. Used Pakistan Airbases For Afghan Operations - "Dawn," "Daily Times" (01/15)

"Defence Minister Chaudhry Ahmad Mukhtar conceded on Thursday that several bases in Pakistan had been used by American forces for overt and covert operations inside Afghanistan, but claimed that all airbases, including the Shamsi airbase in Balochistan, had been completely vacated by the U.S. Answering questions in the Senate, he also admitted that the bases had been used by U.S. drones. 'No U.S. planes were now flying from Shamsi, Jacobabad and Pasni,' the Minister said."

News Story: Lack Of Coordination Delaying Kerry-Lugar Funds - "Dawn" (01/15)

"Lack of coordination among the authorities concerned in Pakistan and the United States is delaying the disbursement of funds under the Kerry Lugar Law (KLL). Although the law was passed by the U.S. Senate on Sept 24, progress on implementation has been slow, sources in the finance ministry told 'Dawn.'... According to a senior Finance Ministry official, the main hurdle for the approval of projects was lack of coordination between U.S. administration officials. 'Robin Raphael, David Lipton and Richard Holbrooke have different approaches about allocation of funds,' the officials said. Richard Holbrooke, the U.S. Envoy for Afghanistan and Pakistan, supports the idea of executing all projects through the NGO sector in Pakistan."

News Story: Pak Urged To Acknowledge Role In Drone Strikes - "Dawn"

(01/15)

"A senior U.S. senator urged Pakistan on Wednesday to publicly acknowledge its role in drone attacks but other experts said they did not see either Washington or Islamabad owning up the air strikes. In a conference call with reporters from Dubai, Senator Carl Levin scolded Pakistan's leaders for privately supporting U.S. drone strikes while publicly denouncing them. 'What troubles me is the public attack on these drone attacks,' he said. 'While at the same time they've privately obviously not told us that we must stop,' Chairman of the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee said."

#### TERRORISM/MILITARY ISSUES

News Story: Kayani Briefs Holbrooke on Anti-Terror Fight - "Daily Times" (01/15)

"U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard Holbrooke called on Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Gen. Ashfaq Parvez Kayani and discussed various issues of interest with him on Thursday. Sources said the COAS briefed him about the ongoing military campaign against terrorism and successful operation in Swat and South Waziristan." (Story not available online)

News Story: Sherry Seeks NA Debate On U.S. Screening Rules - "The News" (01/15)

"Former Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Sherry Rehman on Thursday submitted an adjournment motion in the National Assembly Secretariat on the new screening regulations by the U.S. Transportation Security Administration. While submitting an adjournment motion on the subject for debate in the National Assembly, Ms. Sherry Rehman said that these regulations not only violated the fundamental human entitlements and the right to privacy, these would also cause discomfort to the U.S.-bound passengers."

News Story: JI Tribal Jirga Dubs Af-Pak Policy 'War Declaration' - "Dawn" (01/15)

"A tribal Jirga organized by the Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) in Lahore on Thursday rejected the new U.S. Pak-Afghan policy as 'declaration of war and an aggression against the tribal people.' A declaration adopted at the Jirga said the U.S. after facing a clear defeat in Afghanistan, was targeting the tribal areas in revenge and the imprudent Pakistani rulers were a victim of a conspiracy to chop off this 'sword arm' of Pakistan only to please Washington."

News Story: JuD Declares Suicide Bombings Un-Islamic - "The News" (01/15)

"The Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD) has declared suicide bombings un-Islamic and said those involved in killing of Muslims were playing in the hands of the U.S., India and Israel. 'Gun, grenade and suicide attack is no solution to any problem in Pakistan,' said JuD Central Vice-President Col (Retd) Nazir Ahmad Chaudhry while speaking at a news conference in Peshawar on Thursday."

News Story: Blast Kills Up To 20 Civilians In South Afghan Bazaar - "The News" (01/15)

"A suicide attack in a crowded bazaar killed as many as 20 civilians and wounded 13 more in Afghanistan's restive southern Uruzgan province on Thursday, government and army officials said."

News Story: Banned Outfits Working At Foreign Quarter's Behest - "Daily Times" (01/15)

"In his opening address to the National Assembly, Interior Minister Rehman Malik on Thursday described the recent spike in bombings as 'war against Pakistan,' and said banned organizations - such as the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, the Jaish-e-Muhammad and Al Qaeda - are working against Pakistan at the behest of foreign quarters."

#### POLITICAL ISSUES

News Story: U.S.-India Deal; Pakistan Not To Accept Restrictions: PM

- "The News" (01/15)

"Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani Thursday ruled out U.S. win in Afghanistan without Pakistan's help and that U.S. attitude of imposing restrictions on Pakistan after striking a deal with India is unacceptable. He said this while addressing the National Assembly session in Islamabad. The Prime Minister admitted that despite 60-year long relations with the U.S., trust deficit exists between the two countries."

News Story: Diplomats Now Need Permission To Move Beyond Prescribed Limits - "Daily Times" (01/15)

"The government - in light of the prevailing security situation - decided on Thursday that diplomats must obtain formal permission from the Interior Ministry, through the Foreign Affairs Ministry, for movement beyond the prescribed limits. The decision - which is in line with the Vienna Convention - was made at an Interior Ministry meeting to ensure appropriate security arrangements for diplomats. The high-level meeting - presided over by Interior Minister Rehman Malik - also decided that the use of vehicles by diplomats must be in line with the prescribed procedure."

News Story: Zardari Reposes Trust In Sharifs - "Dawn" (01/15)

"'Reconciliation' was the agenda as President Asif Ali Zardari gave his first audience to senior journalists in the city at a meeting on Thursday. 'I trust them even if they do not trust me,' he told the select gathering at the Governor's House, in reference to the Sharifs of Lahore who have of late been again heard accusing the president of breaking his promises."

#### ECONOMY/ENVIRONMENT

U.S. Embassy Rejects Report on alleged pressure to discard Iran gas pipeline project - "Express" (01/15)

"The U.S. Mission in Islamabad has rejected a news story published in an English-language daily that in meetings with the Minister of Petroleum Wednesday, American officials threatened to end support for Pakistan's electricity projects and end assistance to facilitate the importation of liquefied natural gas (LNG) if Pakistan proceeds with a planned pipeline project with Iran. In a press release issued on Thursday, the embassy rejected the report as completely baseless, and untrue saying that, in fact, Mr. Holbrooke presided at a ceremony launching a \$16.5 million project to upgrade the Tarbela Dam power plant."

News Story: Work On Diamer-Bhasha Dam To Begin This Year - "Dawn" (01/15)

"Federal Minister for Water and Power Raja Pervaiz Ashraf said on Thursday that work on Diamer-Bhasha dam would begin this year and the Asian Development Bank had given assurance of financing the project. Presiding over a meeting of ministerial committee on the project, he said the dam would open a new era of economic development and prosperity."

#### MISCELLANEOUS

News Story: Americans To Hold Anti-Drone Sit-In Before CIA HQ - "The Nation" (01/15)

"An American national and anti-war activist, Cindy Lee Miller Sheehan, has announced to stage a sit-in in front of CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia, on January 16 to protest against the growing drone attacks in Pakistan. In an exclusive interview to 'The Nation' from Texas, USA, on Thursday, Cindy Lee Miller said, 'We strongly condemn the killings of our brothers and sisters in Pakistan and everywhere.'"

#### EDITORIALS/OPINIONS

Editorial: Red Lines Of Little Value, an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (01/15)

"While one would not doubt that Foreign Minister Qureshi discussed

with U.S. Special Envoy Holbrooke some clear 'red lines' in the American-Pakistan relations, it is evident that his interlocutor treated them with little respect.... It should be obvious to the government that things would not change unless it puts its foot down to make the U.S. realize how the 'key ally' in the war on terror ought to be treated.... We must not be duped by the declaration of a billion dollar of help in the execution of energy projects; the quid pro quo should be simply unacceptable. It is to sacrifice the Iranian gas pipeline project, as reportedly Mr. Holbrooke demanded at the time of making the offer of assistance."

Editorial: Holbrooke Accosted, an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (01/15)

"U.S. Special Envoy Richard Holbrooke seems to be having a torrid time in Pakistan. This comes as no surprise to us since reservations and even anti-U.S. feeling are growing throughout the country. The government, whatever its real views, seems also to feel the need to placate angry public opinion by taking a tougher stance against U.S. policies to visiting American dignitaries.... The issues that glue together the tenuous alliance between Pakistan and the U.S. are negated by the issues that divide them. The unstated difference that is the subtext of all diplomatic engagements between the two sides is the contradiction at the heart of Pakistan's policy of supporting the Afghan Taliban, or at the very least turning a blind eye to their activities from Pakistani soil, while initiating military campaigns to crush their Pakistani counterparts.... Both Washington and Islamabad need to address this invisible 'gulf' honestly if the alliance is to endure."

Editorial: Ambassador Holbrooke's Rebuff To Foreign Minister Qureshi, an editorial in the popular rightist Urdu-language daily "Ausaf" (cir. 10,000) (01/15)

"Responding to Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi's demand that the U.S. must repeal the enhanced screening procedure for Pakistani citizens at its airports, Ambassador Richard Holbrooke said that he himself undergoes this procedure, therefore Pakistanis cannot be exempted from these rules. But this flat refusal failed to constrain Mr. Qureshi to feel any qualms. Let aside the foreign minister, everybody knows how the U.S. responds to the statements of our president and prime minister in which they demand Washington to stop the drone attacks. Is it possible for the financial largesse and self-respect to go side by side?"

Editorial: U.S. Leader Richard Holbrooke's Lie, an editorial in the second-largest, nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (01/15)

"There is a difference between screening and strip search. The travelers coming to America from 14 countries including Pakistan are subjected to stripped inspection at American airports. People coming from America tell that passengers from Pakistan are specifically stripped naked and made to sit in a special room for hours. American inspectors come to the room after many hours to ask humiliating questions.... Holbrooke tried to be evasive by describing the humiliating strip search as screening; he in fact lied as per American tradition."

Editorial: The 'Do More' Mantra, an editorial in the country's premier business newspaper, "Business Recorder" (cir. 25,000) (01/15)

"Speaking to the CNN upon their return home from last week's visit to Pakistan, Senators Joe Lieberman and John McCain expressed satisfaction over Pakistan's commitment to the war against terrorists. Lieberman, who is also Chairman of the Senate Committee on Homeland Security, said that Pakistan is a full-partner in the war on terrorism. And that Pakistanis are beginning to understand the U.S. position that the Pakistani and Afghan Taliban are inter-linked; and to defeat one, it is also important to fight the other. As expected, the Senator did not merely show appreciation he also made the usual 'do more' demand. He was more circumspect, though, in making the demand as he said 'there's a possibility that we'll see some more movement in North Waziristan.'"

Editorial: The Taliban, an editorial in the Karachi-based

center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (01/15)

"Clearly, the Americans have extended some cooperation to Pakistan in the fight against the TTP: Baitullah Mehsud was killed in a drone strike, military equipment was rushed to Pakistan to aid its counter-insurgency operations over the last year and aerial surveillance has been shared. The problem though is the way the Americans and the Pakistani sides approach the Taliban problem: each is obsessed with only part of the Taliban 'spectrum' and looks at the rest as incidental to its concerns. But the distinctions are artificial and meaningless in many respects - there are only Taliban, and they need to be defeated."

Editorial: Pakistan Is Not Ignoring Its Defense, an editorial in the Lahore-based populist center-right Urdu daily "Khabrain" (cir. 50,000) (01/15)

"While chairing a meeting of the National Command Authority, Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani has said that Pakistan is a nuclear power. He added that there will be dangerous consequences if India engages in any adventurism.... The fact is that some powers are prodding India towards adventurism against Pakistan. India must act wisely and understand the ground reality. Instead of being used by another power, India should hold its national interests paramount."

Editorial: PM's Timely Warning To India: India Will Be Responsible For Devastation Caused By The Nuclear Bomb, an editorial in the second-largest, nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (01/15)

"Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani has said that India should not go for an adventure with Pakistan, for it would be dangerous for India.... Prime Minister Gilani has rightly made it clear to India that any adventure with nuclear Pakistan could prove to be very costly for India."

Editorial: Pakistan's Timely Warning To India, an editorial in the center-right Urdu daily "Pakistan" (cir. 10,000) (01/15)

"Pakistan has rightly made clear Pakistan's strategy for peace in comparison to India's war mongering. Now we have to see what help our war on terror 'companion' America offers to Pakistan and how does it stop India from nurturing war ambitions."

Opinion: Nisar's Passion, Gilani's Pragmatism, Nation's Disappointment, an op-ed by Mohammad Malick in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (01/15)

"It was a good suggestion by Nisar that for starters unless U.S. reviewed this decision all parliamentary visits to United States should be stopped. A similar view was also expressed by Senator Mushahid and MNA Ahsan Iqbal on Tuesday eve in Geo's weekly program 'Kehnay may kya hurj hai' (there is no harm in saying this).... In his latest visit, a somewhat sincere sounding Ambassador Holbrooke was repeatedly heard asking people about the causes of growing American unpopularity despite all that America was doing in this area. The answer is misleadingly simple actually and one also spelled out later by the Prime Minister when he advised the Americans to concentrate on giving more respect to the people and the country, instead of relying on the factor of increasing financial assistance."

Opinion: Friends, Masters And Bullies, an op-ed by Zafar Hilaly in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (01/15)

"Friend, master or bully, Pakistan's establishment is ever welcoming of U.S. assistance. This suits our psyche. We have always sought to gratify our desires with the least exertion. This accounts somewhat for our lack of success economically.... Hence, today our dependence on the U.S. assistance is well nigh total. Military assistance, the Kerry Lugar handout, U.S.-solicited help in the form of IMF bailouts and access to the U.S. market and - at the US's urging - that of the EU, is what is keeping Pakistan's economy afloat.... Nor does the US influence stop at the economy. In our internal affairs too the U.S. has primacy. Holbrooke assumed as much when he said last week that

if necessary, the U.S. would be happy to play a role in bringing about better understanding between rival political forces within the country. And it takes only a cursory knowledge of our political set-up to realize that all major parties - including the armed forces, which are the largest political party in the country - are decisively swayed by American desires.... Obama is far too busy trying to prove that he is not a wimp to act as a statesman. However, had Pakistan spelt out the terms for its cooperation, a great deal of the political pressure on the government not to toe the disastrous U.S. policy of continuing to expand the war would have abated.... Instead, our lack of a coherent policy suggests that given sufficient American pressure Pakistan will assuredly relent; and that whatever we may say about U.S. incursions into Pak territory, we are malleable. All of this bodes ill for the future and, worse, confuses the public what precisely is the government's position."

Opinion: Peace, But Only With Honor, an op-ed by M.A. Niazi in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (01/15)

"The peace moves have to be seen in the context of an overwhelming U.S. desire to end disputes between the two countries on any basis that would satisfy India, which is supposed to be the United States' main counterweight to China in the region. The U.S. does not grasp that the Indian establishment wants to achieve the freedom of action that is supposed to come with great-power status, and does not want the U.S. tutelage beyond a certain point. Be that as it may, the U.S. wants Pakistan to settle its disputes with India, on Indian terms if necessary.... However, if it rubberstamps an unjust solution cobbled together in New Delhi and approved in Washington, with no input from Muzaffarabad or Srinagar, it will not solve the problem, but merely provide the grounds for another grievance."

Opinion: Obama's Rhetoric And Reality, an op-ed by Aijaz Zaka Syed in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (01/15)

"America's wars and empire project seem to be expanding under its Nobel laureate president. While Iraq and Afghanistan are still burning and Pakistan is hurtling down the precipice, the hawks at Pentagon and Capitol Hill are sharpening their claws for Yemen and Somalia.... Unfortunately, what's happening today in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan and the rest of the Muslim world is happening on Obama's watch. He may not like it but it's past time he took responsibility for America's policies and actions. We cannot go on blaming everything on Bush, especially when he isn't around. Will this ever change? As Obama completes one year in White House next week, it is time for him to think long and hard where the U.S. and the world are headed under his leadership. However, it's still not over yet. He can still take charge of his administration and free it from the oppressive legacy he's inherited. Obama can still lead the world to the dawn of hope and peace that he once promised us."

(All circulation figures are based on estimation)  
Patterson